

Claims

1 1. A method of identifying a subset of records within a database for purposes of
2 representing said database comprising:
3 a) choosing a selection attribute from one of a plurality of attributes contained in
4 records within the database;
5 b) scanning records in the database and applying a randomizing function to the
6 selection attribute of each record to create a randomized record value; and
7 c) applying a selection criteria to identify records for inclusion within a subset of
8 records by comparing the randomized record value of each record with the selection
9 criteria.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the selection attribute contains a numeric value and additionally comprising scaling the numeric value with a factor before applying the randomizing function.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein the selection attribute contains a text string that is used as an input parameter to the randomizing function.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein the scanning of records and applying the selection criteria is implemented by an SQL statement that includes a randomizing function.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein the subset of records that represent the database are transmitted from a server computer to a client computer by means of a network.

6. The method of claim 5 additionally the client performs a data mining analysis on the subset of data that is transmitted to said client by means of the network.

1 7. Client/Server computer apparatus comprising:
2 one or more client computers coupled to a network and including communications
3 instructions for requesting a data set by means of the network; and

4 a server computer coupled to the network and having access to a database having
5 a number of records, said server computer including instructions for sending a dataset
6 made up of a subset of the records in the database to a client computer via the network;
7 said server computer including instructions for scanning records in the database,
8 applying a randomizing function to a specified record attribute of each record in the
9 database to produce a randomized record value, and comparing the randomized record
10 value with a selection criteria to determine whether to include a record in the subset of
11 records from the database for transmission via the network to the client.

8. The Client/Server computer apparatus of claim 7 wherein the client determines the selection criteria and transmits said selection criteria to the server for use in building the subset of records from the database.

9. The Client/Server apparatus of claim 7 additionally comprising an SQL language interpreter for converting requests from a client to an SQL statement including a randomizing function.

1 10. A computer readable medium including instructions for identifying a subset of
2 records within a database for purposes of representing said database, said computer
3 readable medium comprising instructions for:
4 a) choosing a selection attribute from one of a plurality of attributes contained by
5 records with the database;
6 b) scanning records in the database and applying a randomizing function to the
7 selection attribute of each record to create a randomized record value; and
8 c) applying a selection criteria to identify records for inclusion within a subset of
9 records by comparing the randomized record value of each record with the selection
10 criteria.

11. The computer readable medium of claim 10 wherein the selection attribute contains a numeric value and additionally comprising instructions for scaling the numeric value with a factor before applying the randomizing function.

12. The computer readable medium of claim 10 wherein the selection attribute contains a text string that is used by said instructions as an input parameter to the randomizing function.

13. The computer readable medium of claim 10 wherein the scanning of records and applying the selection criteria are performed by instructions that implement an SQL statement that includes a randomizing function.

14. The computer readable medium of claim 10 wherein the instructions transmit a subset of records that represent the database from a server computer to a client computer by means of a network.

15. The computer readable medium of claim 10 additionally comprising instructions for performing a data mining analysis on the subset of data that is transmitted to the client by means of the network.